

# Churchill Community High School

Located in La Ronge, Churchill Community High School is the first school in Saskatchewan to join the Youth Internship Program (YIP) — a significant milestone in CAMC’s goal to implement Aviation and Aerospace education programs in high schools across Canada. It is currently the 19th school to offer education and training based on CAMC’s Aviation Maintenance Orientation Program (AMOP) curriculum.

CAMC asked Churchill Community teacher and program lead Mel Menz to explain how the curriculum — and by extension, the program — came to be at his school. What follows is an excellent example of how a school and local industry can partner together to deliver aviation and aerospace training to our country’s youth as well as address regional labour market needs.

In the spring of 2003 Shaune Lapworth, who is an AME and a friend of mine at Northern Air Operations (NAO), called about some course materials that Dennis Renaud — the manager of NAO — wanted me to look at. Renaud was direct: NAO wondered if Churchill Community would be interested in offering this course.

I originally said that wasn’t likely because our classes had already been planned. Later that week, though, Shaune dropped off the AMOP curriculum and its recommended textbooks at our school. Curious, I decided to take a peek, and was pleasantly surprised: the curriculum proved to be an excellent teaching resource! As a teacher, I was impressed with the way the material was organized, and I also found the content itself very interesting. Physics and math applied in the real world, wow!

Needless to say, when Ken Gray (then our Vice Principal) and I met with Dennis, Shaune, and Dallas Hansen (Quality Control Coordinator at NAO) in August of 2003, we quickly agreed to pursue the program, setting its launch for the fall of 2004.

In April 2004, Dennis came to Churchill to do a brief student-recruitment presentation. Right from the start, fifteen Grade 12 students and a few younger students



(next year’s recruits) expressed interest in the program. To make the program more like a “real world” situation, Dennis and I conducted brief interviews in May with each potential student.

Come August, I got together with Shaune to figure out the nuts and bolts of the program. Shaune invited other AMEs to get involved, and those who were interested selected modules they were willing to present. By the beginning of the school year, there were four AMEs wanting to be part of the program, namely Shaune Lapworth, Troy Patterson, Regan Chell, and J.C. Fafard. To this day, all four technicians come to the school on a daily basis during the course period to teach their module or modules.

Since the recommended hours for the course were too much for one course credit at our school, yet not quite enough for two, we decided to add a work-placement component to the course, thus making it a double-credit course. To have the AMOP program recognized on the students’ transcripts, the Saskatchewan Department of Learning agreed to let the course

be coded as a *Special Project 30* credit and a *Work Experience 30* credit.

NAO and another local company, Trans West, have been taking our students for their work placements. So far, we’ve had each student do a total of 39 hours on the job with those hours spread between Trans West and NAO.

How much interest has this program generated? Mr. Gray, now the Principal at Churchill Community, says this: “There has been and is a great deal of interest in the *Aircraft Maintenance 30* course offered at our school this semester. Students, parents, and school division personnel are all in support of this offering and it seems a natural fit for our location in Northern Saskatchewan, which relies a great deal on the aviation industry.”

